

**Observations in Armed Forces report disturbing, inhuman
but not new says Alzheimer Society of Ontario**

For immediate release

Toronto, ON, May 26, 2020 – The Alzheimer Society joins all Canadians in expressing anger, frustration, and profound sadness at the observations made in a Canadian Armed Forces report released today. No one should have to endure the degrading conditions forced on these residents—and in a prosperous nation and province, there is simply no excuse.

“We have a shared responsibility, a shared duty, to care for our most vulnerable neighbours and friends,” said Cathy Barrick, CEO of the Alzheimer Society of Ontario. “We don’t have the luxury of ignoring the tough questions the report raises, or of turning away from our obligation to fix a dangerously over-stretched system”.

A majority of Ontario’s long-term care residents live with a form of dementia. These individuals deserve attentive, dignified care. Observed instances of degrading comments, inappropriate sedation, and aggressive behaviour towards residents are unacceptable.

Long-term care is one sector that cannot go back to normal after this pandemic is over—because the unfortunate reality is “normal” was not working. In Ontario, residents in homes with high prescription rates are three times as likely to be prescribed antipsychotics as similar residents in homes with low prescription rates. Residents with dementia are more than three times as likely to be subjected to daily restraint use compared to residents without dementia. Medicated and restrained is no way to live: a resident’s personality and expression cannot be suppressed as a routine matter of convenience.

COVID-19 did not create this crisis. We can’t change the tragic events documented by the Armed Forces, or the disturbing trends going back many years. But we can choose to fix what is broken, and to put resident dignity at the heart of every decision we make.

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